

over the picket fence



Fall, 2020

September, October, November

The Mason County Garden Club
Quarterly Newsletter
(Since 1926-our 93rd year)

www.masoncountygardenclub.org

Member: Michigan Garden Clubs, Inc
Central Region and National Garden Clubs, Inc
Club No. 140 – District V

Happy
Fall
y'all





In difficult times, you move forward in small steps. Do what you have to do, but little by little. Don't think about the future, or what may happen tomorrow. Wash the dishes. Remove the dust. Write a letter. Make a soup. You see? You are advancing step by step. Take a step and stop. Rest a little. Praise yourself. Take another step. Then another. You won't notice, but your steps will grow more and more. And the time will come when you can think about the future without crying.



- Elena Mikhalkova

Letter from our Garden Club President:

Dear Garden Club Friends –

As I sit to write this note to all of you, I think about the things that have happened during the last three months. And the things that haven't. The world around us is different, to say the least. But life moves on, sometimes oblivious to the somewhat strange happenings around us. We were able to have two outdoor meetings in June and July but the virus is hanging on a bit too strongly so we've cancelled all of our remaining meetings and events for the rest of the year. I hope we can change that, but right now, we're in a "wait and see" mode.

I'm also referring to the bright points of our lives where we still can see friends (at a distance), keep our gardens growing (and sharing plants, veggies and advice), and seeing our community remain strong during this pandemic. I'm referring to those sad points in our lives where a pandemic cannot change the outcome: the passing of loved ones, the sickness occurring in family and friends, the alteration of life celebrations, and the distancing that takes on the form of not being able to be amongst family and friends. Even though I was diagnosed positive with the virus in mid-July, I never saw a sick day, nor a sick relative or acquaintance. Others have not been so lucky and my situation just showed how close to home the COVID-19 virus can be.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has changed our daily lives, it hasn't changed our strengths, our hopes and our dreams. We're going to try to use the Zoom conference software to hold our August meeting. We held our Executive Board meeting with Zoom and it helped us to discuss and debate our next steps. Maybe by actually seeing one another, we can have a better feeling about the status and well-being of our members. And I need to note that our projects continue to prosper and be welcoming to the community around us.

Be safe. Be healthy. And be careful, with your loved ones and with our community.

Your president,
Sue Ann



September

- 6 Terry Baldwin
- 9 Carol Copeland
- 17 Bonnie Henretty
- 19 Joan Nelson
- 22 Liz Donakowski
- 23 Karen Oele
- 28 Karen Klukowski

October

- 3 Rhonda Hildebrandt
- 12 Carmen Muscat
- 19 Sue Joslin
- 20 Sue Ann Hanson
- 22 Dawn Rollenhagen
- 23 Agnes Gray
- 26 Sue Smith
- 30 Linda Starr

November

- 3 Vicki Houk
- 4 Patricia Otto
- 12 Susan Jabrocki
- 13 Marilyn Raymond
- 14 Gig Rose
- 18 Sandra Luxford
- 18 Sandra Zwyghuizen
- 20 Diane Davis
- 20 Dianne Portwine
- 22 Julie Haselhuhn
- 25 Sue Sabin
- 28 Roxanne Antczak



Our featured member in this issue of "Over the Picket Fence" is Marilyn Austin who has been an active member of the MCGC since 2016. She had been wanting to join for 30 years and was able to make it happen 4 years ago. Marilyn is serving this year as the Chairman of the Petunia Parade committee, being responsible, with her committee, for the beautiful petunias on our block at the Cartier Mansion. As we all know, this has been a challenging year for the petunias and Marilyn stepped up as a first time chairman to see that those petunias flourished. She is also involved with the Cups of Cheer group and Blue Star, War & Veterans Memorials Committee.

Born and raised in the Lainsburg area, she graduated from Lainsburg High School near East Lansing. She and her husband Dick have been married 54 years. It was his work in construction, boat manufacturing and fabrication, that lead them to settle in Ludington at the middle bayou of Hamlin Lake. Early in their marriage, Marilyn worked for Michigan Bell Telephone and later Nordlund & Associates, retiring after 10 years, from Meijer. They raised 4 children, 3 sons and 1 daughter. Those children are scattered from Ludington, Holland, Whitehall to Florida. Two of those sons are medical school graduates and board certified. The family also includes 8 grandchildren.

The American Red Cross has been a big part of Marilyn's life for the last 30 years. She is a regular volunteer with local blood drives and was a relief worker for Hurricane Katrina in Louisiana.

Marilyn's love for gardening came from her Grandmother. Her Grandmother's home was across the street and Marilyn has wonderful memories of times spent with her. Grandma would take her by the hand and walk through the flower and vegetable gardens. As they walked, Grandma would point out the various plants and share the name with her. To this day, Marilyn has no difficulty identifying a Quince bush. Her gardens are taking a step back right now as the large lawn and property take up a great deal of time with clean-up and maintenance.

Marilyn, you are a valuable member of the club, always willing to do your share. Thank you for your smile as you enter the meeting room and for stepping up when a committee needs an extra hand. Hope you know it's very much appreciated.

Despite Covid-19, we held two meetings during the Summer and finally was able to install our new officers. Thanks to Sharon Morman for having us out to her beautiful Sanctuary for these meetings. It was decided in July to discontinue these meetings to insure the safety of our members...Zoom meetings were in our future!!

June Meeting (Installation of Officers and Plant Exchange):



Jackie hands candles to officers: Sue Ann, Gail, Dianne Sandi, Julie T., Judy, Julie H, Sharon



Installation of Officers



Dawn conducts installation



Sue Ann presents flowers to her Board



Dawn presents Sue Ann with President's pin



Masked members set up chairs for social distancing.



Members look over plants for plant exchange

JULY-GARDEN OF THE MONTH

The July Garden of the Month is at the charming home of Gale Martin, 319 N. Robert St., Ludington. Gale enlisted the assistance of Kent Halliday, three years ago, to install the hardscape and plantings. The front and back yards include hardy geraniums, dianthus, astilbe, goatsbeard and bottle rocket ligularia. Don't forget to drive down the alley to view her back yard flower and raised vegetable garden.



SAVE THE DATE

Upcoming Events

- ***Friday, September 4, 11, 18 - 3pm – 7 pm:**
Ludington Farmers Market. North James Street Plaza.
- ***Thursday, September 3 and Monday, September 7 – 10am-1 pm:**
Pentwater Farmers Market, Village Green.
- ***Saturday, September 26, Sunday, September 27:**
Pentwater Annual Fall Fest Art & Craft Fair, Village Green
- * **Saturday, September 12:**
Petunia Season Removal Day. Watch for additional information.
- ***Tuesday, September 29 – 6:30 p.m. – 8pm:**
AFFEW Invasive Plant Species Eradication -Cartier Park - Dog Park.
- ***September 29, 30:**
MGC, Inc Flower Show School, Course I, -Petoskey. Contact Sue Ann Hanson for additional information including tuition reimbursement.
- ***October 5, 6:**
MGC, Inc Landscape Design Course III, Grand Haven. Contact Sue Ann Hanson for additional information including tuition reimbursement.

July Meeting: We again met at Sharon Morman's Wildlife Sanctuary for a business meeting and tour. Vice President, Julie Tews, stood in for President, Sue Ann Hansen, who had been tested positive for Covid-19. Luckily, as it turned out, Sue Ann had no symptoms and was soon back to business as usual.



Members set up chairs for meeting



Judy Olson, Julie Tews, Gig Rose



Purchasing tickets for DD drawing given By Julie Tews



Meeting conducted by VP Julie Tews



Standing for pledge and Club Collect



Ladies wearing masks and social distancing

After the meeting we enjoyed a tour of Sharon's sanctuary:



Sharon gives information on sanctuary



Diane D and Marilyn A. doing scavenger hunt



Ladies touring sanctuary



Sharon conducts the tour



Picture of one of the ponds



Beautiful wild flowers



Looking for something to do during this time of social distancing and wearing a mask? A ride to Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary would be a nice way to spend a couple hours enjoying nature. The roots of Michigan Garden Clubs commitment to teaching about, and reinforcing the importance of the world of pollinators, are firmly imbedded in our on-going support of Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary. Loda Lake has been and continues to be the only wildflower sanctuary that is part of the National Park system. Making an association between “wild flowers” and “native plants” helps to link the ideas of protecting native habitat with protecting our native pollinators.

Loda Lake Wildflower Sanctuary is a 72-acre natural area within the Manistee National Forest in west-central lower Michigan. A partnership between the National Forest Service and Michigan Garden Clubs was established in 1949 and we have cooperatively managed the area since that time. MGC is closely involved in planning for site improvements and helping to fund them. Recent improvements have included a new entrance road, improved signage, protective fencing and a rebuilt boardwalk.

The sanctuary is an ideal location for the preservation and observation of wildflowers and other native plants such as pitcher plants, ferns, mosses and ground pines because it includes many different plant habitats. There is a small lake, a boardwalk over a bog and over 2 miles of trails through oak-pine forests, pine plantations and old fields. A recently developed “cultural trail” passes by the foundations of buildings that were once part of a farm that existed on the site in the early 1800’s. The sanctuary is located south of Baldwin and approximately 5 miles north of the city of White Cloud on M37.

Ideas for Fall Planting:

Nights are getting shorter...fall is getting closer! That’s why Proven Winners offers these bulbs, perennials and flowering shrubs for Fall planting. Pictures and additional information can be found at www.provenwinners.com

Prairie Winds® 'Desert Plains' Fountain : This large fountain grass makes a beautiful focal point in the fall garden. Showy bottlebrush-shaped flowers emerge dusky purple and age to tan atop the upright vase-shaped clump of green foliage which takes on red, orange, and gold tones in fall. Improvement over older cultivars in habit, flowering performance, and fall color.

Arctic Fire Yellow Dogwood : A ray of winter sunshine for your landscape! Arctic Fire Yellow dogwood offers the same legendary durability as red-twig dogwood, but brings a cheerful yellow option. Stunning on its own, or planted with Arctic Fire Red dogwood, it also brings a nice option for cutting for winter and holiday arrangements. Native to North America.

Pyromania Flashpoint Red Hot Poker: Bring unique drama to your landscape with the spiky flowers and upright habit of this perennial. Chartreuse yellow buds mature to creamy white over grass-like foliage.

Snippet Lime Weigela : Snippet® weigelas are the best thing to happen to this spring-blooming favorite in years: they re-bloom abundantly and naturally grow as a dwarf, rounded mound. They fit perfectly in just about any sunny spot in your landscape to add appealing structure and months of color. Snippet Lime® weigela has glowing lime-green foliage that perfectly sets off the vivid pink blooms. They appear in late spring along with other weigelas, but then they continue to bloom all through summer with waves of fresh flowers. No deadheading required - deer resistant, too!

'Serendipity' Ornamental Onion/Allium: Globe-like, rosy-purple flowers top attractive blue foliage. When crushed, the leaves will emit a smell of onion. The fragrant flowers and foliage attract the bees and butterflies.



The best thing you can do for your fall garden is to leave the 'mess' as it is. (I do all my clean up in the spring). Unless you have diseased, invasive, or pest-infested, all that old plant growth from the summer-flower perennials and shrubs, fall leaves, decomposing branches, and more, is a vital food and habitat for all living things in your garden. Most birds, bees, butterflies, insects, whether it's their eggs or they're going to bed for the winter, live in our gardens and landscape year around. They need this stuff to live.

I do these things around this time of year unless the weather stays really nice then I push it off until it gets cool and damp then it's time to get it done.

- * Weed and add compost to a needy bed, plants aren't performing well, soil is not so good it could use a top dressing of compost.
- * Plant spring and summer bulbs. Don't forget you can plant bulbs in pots/containers. Make sure to mark the area you planted so you don't dig them up come spring. There's nothing more maddening than forgetting you planted bulbs in a nice empty space only to find it isn't empty!! I use a tongue depressor stick to mark mine. They weather down nicely so you don't see them unless you go to dig there.
- * Continue feeding the hummingbirds and Orioles until you're certain they are really gone.
- * Get ready to set up your bird feeding stations. Clean, and repair them now, not when you see the snow start to fly, It's no fun when your hands are freezing!
- * Divide and transplant Iris, peony, astilbe, daylilies, almost anything that's not flowering now can be moved to a new home this time of year. Fall rains get them watered in and off to a good start before the ground freezes.
- * Let those seeds fall or sprinkle them now for spring flowers- example would be cleome, poppy, verbena, foxglove and many more. I DO NOT let phlox, coneflower, or sweet william go to seed, or you could end up with more than you know what to do with!

If you have questions on how to divide any plant please call me, it's just too hard to write down. It's on my list to have a program with demo on plants and how to divide. One of the best pieces of advice I can give you is do not let your beds go into fall and winter with weeds in them! So when I started this column by saying leave the mess, I mean your plants that might need dead heading or trimmed up-- leave them, not the weeds! This includes grass. Fall is a great time for grass to be planted and grow but not in your gardens. So, get them out now and be off to a good start in the spring or you will have much much more when it warms up again.

I keep a journal, write it down, don't think you will remember! Trust me you won't! Even the little things I write down and check it off when you are done. I even take pictures with my phone and if it's really important like redoing a bed I get them printed off. This is a project you can look at or study over the winter. It feels good when you can check it off the list. Winter is the best time to think about your garden, it makes you happy. Look back at the magazines you didn't have time for in the summer, get on line and look around, and start looking at or ordering catalogs.

Feel free to email me with questions, I will help if I can. If it's too hard to email me about, call me. I don't mind. Hope you found some of this helpful. **Happy Gardening Juls**



*Tis all a myth that Autumn grieves,
For watch the rain among the leaves;
With silver fingers dimly seen
It makes each leaf a tambourine.*
–Samuel Minturn Peck, American writer (1854-1938)



How To Keep Your Mums Blooming Longer Than Ever This Fall – 3 Simple Secrets To Success!

It's hard to find a more popular plant for fall decorating than flowering mums – but wouldn't it be great if you could keep them blooming just a bit longer throughout the Autumn season?

Mums, or “Chrysanthemums” as officially known, can certainly be pricey to purchase. And unfortunately, they seem to be getting more and more expensive as each year passes.

**Nothing says “Autumn” like beautiful, blooming chrysanthemums in full color!*

With that in mind, getting the most “bloom” for your buck is in the best interest of every gardener. So here is a look at 3 simple secrets for keeping your mums and their beautiful blooms around as long as possible this fall.

3 Simple Secrets To Keep Mums Blooming Longer

Buy Smart At The Start:

Getting the most from your mum plants starts at the checkout begins right at the time of purchase.

** Selecting mums that are already in full bloom will give you just a few weeks of color at home.*

Unfortunately, mums that are already showing their blooms are not the best choice for bringing home. In fact, if they are in full flowering mode, they most likely have less two weeks or less of prime color left. Now that might be just the ticket if you need them for an instant display. But if you want your mums to be around for a month or longer, you need to pass on those plants. Even partial blooming mums in stores should be avoided if at all possible. Instead, look for plants that are full of buds but have not yet flowered. And the tighter the bud – the better!

**To get the most bloom for your buck, choose plants with compact, tightly wrapped buds.*

Mums at this stage will not only last longer, they can be managed better by the next two secrets to extend their bloom period to the fullest. And don't forget, when purchasing your mums, look for hardy mums that can be planted to enjoy year after year.

Watering Mums:

Now that you have chosen a mum with lasting power, success all comes down to giving it the best care possible. And that means keeping it watered well, and with the right method. The less humid and dry air of Autumn can quickly dry the soil in potted plants. Especially a plant that is using additional moisture to produce blooms.

** The less humid, drier conditions of fall dry out plants quickly.*

Mums require a consistent supply of water to keep their bloom cycle as long as possible. If they are allowed to dry out for extended periods by infrequent and inconsistent watering, it will greatly reduce their overall bloom cycle. Check the soil daily with the tip of your fingertips. If the soil is dry an inch or so down, it's time to water. Most potted mums will require water at least once a day, even more if it is exceptionally hot.

How You Water Makes A Big Difference!

As crazy as it sounds, how you water your mums also plays a huge role in how long the blooms will last too. And it all starts by never watering your mums from the top down. When the blooms of mums become saturated with water, it weakens and fades them quickly. In fact, it can cut a bloom's life span in half!

** When watering, water at the base of the plant and not through the buds or flowers on top.*

Instead, water around the edges of pots and containers, or below the bloom line when watering with a hose. The important part is to keep the blooms from becoming saturated.

Location, Location, Location.

Where you display your mums will also impact their blooming life span. Mums can certainly handle full sun, but all of that heat and light greatly reduce their overall bloom cycle time. Choosing partial to mostly shady locations will make a big difference in how long your blooms stay strong. In fact, it can extend their healthy look by as much as a full two weeks or more!

** Keeping plants in more shade than sun greatly extends the overall bloom life of the plant.*

Although the plants need sun to develop buds, mums will still unfurl their blooms in indirect light. That is why porches, patios and even underneath the canopy of bushes and trees are all excellent choices. Not only do they keep the sun's rays at bay, but they also protect the mums from hard rains as well.





Fall Project for Monarchs by Marian McNabb, National Garden Club Chairman Monarch Watch

Fall is the time to collect milkweed seeds for spring planting.

Monarch Watch, an affiliate program with the Kansas Biological Survey of the University of Kansas, tracks the annual North American migration of the monarch butterfly, an indicator species for the need for pollinator habitat conservation. The program engages citizens of all ages in large-scale research projects involving the tagging and tracking of migrating monarchs. These projects produce significant data on the migration and the conservation issues related to it. For more information, visit www.monarchwatch.org/

Monarch Watch has requested NGC members collect milk-weed seed, native to your area, and send it to them so they can start plugs for spring planting. Monarch Watch is an excellent source for plugs and seeds in the spring for our Monarch Waystations.

Collect the seeds, locate dry seed pods on milkweed plants and make sure the pods are brown in color. Monarch Watch requests that seeds be separated from the pods whenever possible. There's an extra advantage to separating the seeds –the pods make an attractive addition to your dried floral arrangements. If you send the whole pod, be sure to secure it with tape, so the seeds are intact during shipping.

Do not mix different species of milkweed. Each variety should be placed in a separate envelope or package, and the species labeled accordingly. Monarch Watch asks that seeds be collected from wild-sourced plants, native to the United States. They do not accept tropical milkweed seeds. In addition, please make sure pods are dry and insect free. Please send at least one ounce of seed. For example, two to four onion bags of pods yield approximately one pound of seed.

Collecting seeds, please package them in an envelope, paper bag or onion bag, so that if they're not completely dry, mold won't form as in a plastic bag. Please mark them. For example, Common Milkweed - *Asclepias syriaca* (if known), your name, your address and e-mail, along with the date collected. Please also include helpful information such as if the site had a large amount of milkweed, or if it collected from a small area.

A new booklet from NGC, *Inviting Butterflies into Your Garden*, provides information for anyone interested in butterfly gardens. You may print the booklet directly from the NGC website at www.gardenclub.org or contact NGC Member Services at 1-800-550-6007 or 314-776-7574, extension 218. The booklet is \$3.

Also, do you love monarch butterflies, or know someone who does? Please consider purchasing a NGC monarch butterfly pin, \$10, available on the NGC website or contact NGC Member Services.



Gift Suggestions:

I know its a bit early to be thinking about Christmas gifts but many of us start our shopping months ahead. I've been reading some good books lately. I'm old fashioned, I still prefer reading a book while holding it in my hands rather than reading it at a computer or iPad. Because I have more time than I use to, having retired this year and the covid-19 lock down, besides watching birds I've been trying to identify butterflies, moths and dragonflies on our properties. Identifying butterflies can be an interesting hobby for grandchildren as well as adults. Here are the names of books I have purchased to help identify these beautiful and colorful creatures: "Michigan Butterflies & Skippers" by Mogens C. Nielsen; "Butterflies of the North Woods" by Larry Weber; "Moths & Caterpillars of the North Woods" by Jim Sogaard; "Dragonflies of the North Woods" by Kurt Mead. These are all field guides. Another very good book is "Raising Butterflies in the Garden" by Brenda Dziedzic, a master gardener, who lives in Westland Michigan with a yard only 60 ft. x 120 ft. Since the year 2000 she has raised over 5,000 butterflies and moths. Her book is very detailed and has beautiful pictures of the eggs, caterpillars and butterflies as well as maps where they are found, size, larval food plants and adult food plants. I thoroughly recommend this book.

Those of you who know me and my yard, know that I am not an advocate of lawns, especially large lawns. Why, because lawns need frequent applications of fertilizer, lime, herbicides, pesticides and watering. They are sterile environments that do not support life. I got rid of my lawn at least 20 years ago and it is planted with trees, shrubs and flowers, lots of native flowers. I just finished reading "Bringing Nature Home", How you Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants, by Douglas W. Tallamy, a professor and chair of the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. He reinforces my decision to get rid of my lawn in favor of providing biodiversity for our native insects and wildlife. I purchased his new book too at the same time. Haven't read it yet but it is called "Nature's Best Hope", A new Approach to Conservation that Starts in Your Yard. I'm sure it will be as informative and enjoyable as the first book. Another good read is an old classic "A Sand County Almanac" by Aldo Leopold. I probably first read it 50 years ago and have reread it a couple of times.

I hope you find these suggestions helpful. You can always contact me for more information. **Submitted by : Sharon Morman**





We hope you have enjoyed this edition of “over the picket fence.” Ideas and suggestions are always welcome for the newsletter. Don’t hesitate to contact Diane or Gwen with your thoughts. With the difficult times we are now experiencing, it is so good to be able to communicate in this way and we are thankful that we can continue to add some “normality” to your gardening life with **“over the picket fence”**.

Stay Safe....Miss You.....Diane Davis and Gwen Jackson

Club Collect

Keep us, O God, ever mindful of nature’s generous bounty
May we always bear in mind it is ours to trust, to protect
To nurture, and to enjoy.

Mrs. C.C. Caswell